



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications
& Public Affairs
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240
202-208-6843 phone
202-219-0910 fax

National Park Service News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JANUARY 24, 2008

David Barna: (202) 208-6843

Gerry Gaumer: (202) 208-6843

National Parks Offer Winter Fun for Visitors

WASHINGTON, DC – If you are thinking about getting away this winter, think about visiting a National Park. There are a large variety of winter activities available to visitors, and whether you want snow or sun, the National Park Service (NPS) can offer both. From Alaska to Massachusetts to the warm beaches of California and Florida, national parks offer something for everyone, anytime of the year.

“I encourage everyone to remember that National Parks aren’t only for summer vacations, but places to visit all year long,” said NPS Director Mary A. Bomar. “The magnificent places protected by the NPS provide incredible opportunities to experience the marvelous natural and cultural heritage of our country – year round.”

Many parks offer special programs in the winter in addition to their regular programs – the following are just a few of the many wonderful programs taking place this winter. For a more complete list of winter activities and special programs in national parks, visit http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/winter2008/activities.htm. Visitors are encouraged to visit the NPS web site at www.nps.gov and see what other parks are offering this winter too.

De Soto National Memorial in Florida will be running its annual camp season December 15, 2007, to March 30, 2008. Camp Uzita at De Soto National Memorial brings visitors back in time to 1539, when 650 Spanish conquistadors came to Tampa Bay and changed the lives of its native inhabitants forever. Programs focus on the meeting of two very different cultures. Living history interpreters demonstrate Native and European arts and crafts. Children are invited out on Saturdays to learn about Native American mask painting and paint one to take home for themselves. For more information, contact the park at (941)792-0458.

Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. One of the most enjoyable winter activities for any national park occurs in Grand Teton with the ranger-led snowshoe hikes. These hikes take place everyday, and the park supplies visitors with classic wooden Yukon or Alaskan-style snowshoes for their outing with the ranger to explore the winter beauty of the park. Visitors learn about how the harsh conditions of winter determines which animals and plants survive here as they amble over hill and dell in search of wildlife

-more-

and/or signs of wildlife. The trip eventually brings the visitors to the banks of the Snake River. For more information, contact the park at (307) 739-3300.

Death Valley National Park in California is the answer to those people who find it really difficult to enjoy the national parks because it is cold and snowy or just cold and wet. An abundance of ranger conducted activities are available at Death Valley including living history guided tours of Scotty's Castle (a 1920s mansion with all original furnishings and stories to match). In addition to ranger conducted activities the park's 3.4 million acres are available for exploration on foot or by car and/or 4x4 vehicles. With the longer winter nights, Death Valley is an excellent place to enjoy the brilliant night skies! We have some of the best and clearest skies in our country and Death Valley's dark night skies expose the stars like few people have ever seen. If people are dreaming of the days to come where they can hike in shorts and a light jacket and see spectacular scenery and relive the early history of the west, why wait until June, July or August- come to Death Valley and experience it during the winter! For more information, contact the park at (760) 786-3200.

The National Park Service always recommends stopping by the park's visitor center to get the latest, most up-to-date park information. In addition, NPS reminds visitors that safety is critical, and hikers should stay on marked trails and let family members and/or friends know their whereabouts. Remember to dress appropriately for the elements and activities you are going to engage in, and it's always best to have plenty of water on hand (and maybe a little hot chocolate too). Parks Rangers are easily recognizable in their distinctive green and gray uniforms. Ask questions...that's what they are there for!

-NPS-